

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 9, 2011 (second day of two-day Commission meeting)

Agenda Item: 2012 – 2013 Elk Hunting Seasons, Quota Ranges and HD Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Proposed Rule

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 60 minutes

Background

Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for all game species. This happens every other year between December and Final adoptions in February. In proposing regulations to the Commission, FWP proposes existing structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

For the 2012 and 2013 elk season structures, some of the more significant proposed changes include reducing antlerless harvest in some parts of Regions 2 and 3. The Elk Archery Working Group recommendation would adjust elk archery permits in central and eastern Montana.

For other proposed changes see Commission Master List for the December meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Elk season comments were received during scoping and included interest in more conservative harvest opportunities for antlerless elk on public lands in some areas. In addition to public comment at the Dec. 9 Commission meeting, public comment will run thru 5 PM Monday, Jan. 23, 2012. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb.16, 2012 Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2011 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals have been included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 9 Commission meeting. The Elk Archery Working Group recommendation will be presented as an informational item on Dec. 8. The Commission may act on this working group recommendation on Dec. 9. At this time, FWP recommends adopting the working group's recommendation to allow broader public review and comment.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the 2012 and 2013 Elk Hunting Seasons and Hunting Districts as presented by FWP.